

President Bush. I'd like to thank the press for not violating the beeper policy. [*Laughter*]

Q. We didn't want to get Gordon [Assistant Press Secretary Johndroe] in trouble again. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Gordon became an international figure. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to scholar Gao Zhan, an unpaid fellow at American University, who has been detained in China since February 11, and her husband, Xue Donghua, and their 5-year-old son, U.S. citizen Andrew Xue, who were held separately for nearly a month. Vice Premier Qian referred to President Jiang Zemin of China. The Vice Premier spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 7417—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2001

March 22, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

With the dawn of a new century, America's youth face a world of nearly unlimited possibilities. New advances in technology, medicine, and science offer the potential for great progress. We must ensure that every child has the technical skills needed to pursue success in their respective fields. However, they also require the wisdom and understanding to make sense of an ever-changing world.

As teachers, parents, and citizens, we have a responsibility to pass on more than just academic knowledge to our children. We also need to provide them with the moral strength to see them through turbulent and challenging times. An education that nurtures goodness and kindness gives direction and dignity to the lives of our young people and strengthens our communities. Humanity has long recognized such core and never-changing ethical values as vital to the well-being of a society and its citizenry.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, clearly understood the importance of fostering character. His es-

tablishment of educational, social, and rehabilitative institutions bettered the lives of people both in this country and abroad. As he once said, "All educational efforts are basically meaningless unless built on the solid foundation of good character." Next year marks the 100th anniversary of the Rebbe's birth, but his legacy of teaching that a nation's true greatness is measured by whether it produces citizens of compassion and character remains timeless.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 4, 2001, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2001. By teaching children the highest standards of ethical behavior, Americans prepare our next generation of leaders to pursue meaningful lives as members of a decent and caring society.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:47 a.m., March 23, 2001]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 26.

Exchange With Reporters During a Tour of the Salvation Army Senior Center in Portland, Maine

March 23, 2001

Expulsion of Russian Diplomats

Q. In response to the fact that the Russians responded in kind——

The President. They can make whatever decisions they deem necessary. Our country took the right course of action.

Q. What message does it send, though, do you think?

The President. It says that we will be firm and consistent in our foreign policy.

[*The tour continued.*]